

September 10, 1999

Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers La., Rm. 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

4587 '99 SEP 21 AIO:21

Re: Docket Nos. 98N-1230, 96P-0418, and 97P-0197

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing because I am interested in the reduction of salmonella in eggs. Every year, when egg production drops, approximately 195 million hens in North America endure a bizarre torment called forced molting. This cruel practice throws the hens' systems into collapse, stressing and shocking their worn-out bodies into laying one more batch of eggs before being sent to slaughter. The frightened birds are deprived of food for up to two weeks, water is restricted for up to eight weeks and they are kept in pitch dark for weeks on end. As a result, hundreds of thousands die while those who survive grow weak, shed all their feathers, and lose up to 35 percent of their body weight. Forced molting also weakens hens' bones, resulting in fragile, broken limbs.

Recent research, including a study conducted by U.S. government scientists, shows that forced molting can be harmful to humans as well. The studies show that forced molting increases the frequency and severity of Salmonella enteritidis among hens. The stressful conditions weaken their immune systems so badly that they become prone to disease and salmonella infections. The result is sick birds and contaminated eggs.

I am convinced that forced molting is contributing to the rise in salmonella cases, and believe that ridding the egg industry of this practice would reduce the occurrence of salmonella poisoning in humans.

Sincerely,



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96P-0418

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HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION
CROSS REFERENCE SHEET

Docket Number/Item Code: 98N-1230/C656

See Docket Number/Item Code: 97P-0197/C657
96P-0418/C656